

single disabled student. It is close to 40 feet in length. This is what we have done to our schoolchildren, to our teachers, and to our school districts. It's wrong. We aren't paying for it and we have to reform here, not in the school districts.

FISCAL YEAR 1998 SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS BILL

Mr. KERREY. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss my strong concerns regarding the fiscal year 1998 emergency supplemental appropriation bill. I was extremely disappointed by last week's decision by the House Republican leadership to split the fiscal year 1998 emergency supplemental bill into two separate legislative pieces: one includes funding for defense and disaster relief and the other contains funds for the International Monetary Fund and payment of U.S. arrears to the United Nations. I was similarly disappointed that the Senate Appropriations Committee not only marked-up two separate pieces of legislation, but that funding for U.S. debts to the UN was not included at all.

Mr. President, I am very concerned about the House and Senate legislative strategy involved in splitting the supplemental appropriations bill. I firmly believe that the Congress must act quickly to pass a single, emergency bill prior to the April recess.

It is imperative that the Congress act immediately to supply the \$18 billion requested by the administration for the IMF. I am pleased that the Senate Appropriations Committee voted yesterday on legislation that includes both the \$14.5 billion to replenish the IMF's capital base and the \$3.5 billion for the new arrangements to borrow, NAB, while encouraging necessary IMF reforms. The Asian financial crisis poses too great of a threat to the economic prosperity of the American people to allow it to become mired in non-related, political debates. As Secretary Rubin has stated, "Financial instability, economic distress and depreciating currencies all have direct effects on the pace of our exports, the competitiveness of our companies, the growth of our economy and, ultimately, the well-being of American workers and farmers." To be clear, the growth and competitiveness of our economy is at stake.

Mr. President, I am confident that the vast majority of our colleagues agree on the importance and the need to move forward with the IMF funding proposal. However, my fear is that while we are likely to see quick action on defense and disaster relief, a separate funding vehicle for the IMF is likely to get bogged down in non-related arguments.

The American people have a right to ask: if there is agreement, why the delay? It appears that certain Members of Congress are prepared to hold funding for the IMF hostage to their desire to fight, yet again, the international family planning issue.

Mr. President, I do not begrudge the concerns of my colleagues who feel strongly about the issue of international family planning. I recognize that disagreement exists. In my opinion, international family planning assistance is essential to health care in developing countries, resource and environmental management, and economic development. While I am confident that this is an issue that we will once again fight during consideration of the fiscal year 1999 foreign operations appropriations bill, I believe that it is extremely irresponsible to hold up IMF funding to debate this issue.

Mr. President, the truth is I've actually begun to lose count of how many issues are being held hostage by proponents of the so-called Mexico City language. We now see reports that this issue will be attached to the conference report on State Department reauthorization, thus slowing up efforts to achieve much needed reforms in our foreign policy decisionmaking structure. Similarly, payment of our debts to the United Nations are also being held up over this same issue. At a time in which we are asking our allies to stand with us in opposition to Saddam Hussein, to force him to comply with the UNSCOM inspection regime, we refuse to pay our debts. It would be naive to think that this doesn't affect our ability to lead at the United Nations. It is time for real leadership in the Congress; it's time to move forward on this issue.

I would like to draw my colleagues' attention to an editorial that appeared in the March 16 edition of the New York Times entitled "Foreign Policy Held Hostage." This editorial clearly outlines the risks to our broader foreign policy goals when narrow interests are pursued indefinitely. I ask unanimous consent that the full text of this editorial be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the New York Times, Mar. 16, 1998]

FOREIGN POLICY HELD HOSTAGE

House Republican leaders flaunt their disregard for America's broader interests by letting anti-abortion crusaders hold up funding for the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations. The money is being held hostage to an obnoxious amendment by Representative Christopher Smith of New Jersey that would block American financing of any foreign group lobbying for less restrictive abortion laws abroad. President Clinton rightly threatens to veto any bill with the Smith language.

A similar ploy by Mr. Smith blocked I.M.F. and U.N. funding measures last fall. Speaker Newt Gingrich should understand that I.M.F. and U.N. payments are too vital to American interests to be ensnared in abortion politics and ought to let an unencumbered bill pass the House.

The \$18 billion for the I.M.F. is meant to replenish its reserves after the recent bailouts of Thailand, South Korea and Indonesia. Asia's financial crisis is not over, and the fund may need the money in the coming months. America's trade interests and even

the health of the economy could be jeopardized by delaying this funding.

The nearly \$1 billion for the U.N. would pay off most of America's debt to the world organization. For years, Congress has withheld some of America's dues to leverage reforms at the U.N. Many of those changes have now been adopted under the leadership of Kofi Annan, the new Secretary General. Other countries have had to make up for the loss of American money, undermining Washington's bargaining power in the U.N. If the back dues remain unpaid, the United States will lose its voting rights in the General Assembly next year, an embarrassment for the nation that led the effort to create the United Nations half a century ago. Abortion politics has no place in determining America's role in the U.N. and the I.M.F.

Mr. KERREY. Mr. President, I close by urging the Senate to move swiftly to pass a single fiscal year 1998 supplemental appropriations bill before we leave for the April recess. The safety and prosperity of the American people and our economy is too important to do less.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROBERTS). Under the previous order, the Senator from Wyoming is recognized to speak for up to 45 minutes.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr. THOMAS. Thank you, Mr. President. For some time now, we have had what we call a freshman/sophomore focus in which those of us who have come here in the last 2 to 4 years come to the floor to talk about some of the issues that we believe are the pivotal issues before this Congress and the American people, the ones that have the highest priority and are most difficult. We come again this morning to talk largely about the questions and problems associated with Social Security. All of us, of course, are dedicated to continuing to have a strong Social Security program. So that is the focus of our freshman focus this morning.

I yield to the Senator from Minnesota, Senator GRAMS, for 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota is recognized.

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I rise this morning along with my colleague to make a few brief observations about Social Security and how we can preserve and strengthen it. I thank my colleague from Wyoming for reserving floor time so that we can address this critical issue.

I was shocked by a recent poll revealing that Americans would rather put their Social Security money under their mattress than entrust it to the Government. According to that poll, 46 to 56 percent of Americans said they would prefer to put their retirement savings under their mattress—only 28 to 35 percent would rely on Uncle Sam. Why are so many Americans skeptical about the government-run Social Security program? The answer is simple: in its present form, the program is a raw deal for most Americans. It will not be there for baby boomers, and it will heavily burden our children and grandchildren.